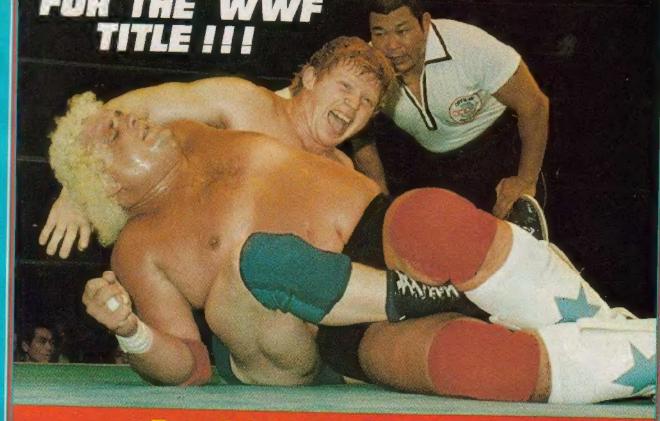
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Exclusive Photos:
DUSTY RHODES WRESTLES BOB BACKLUND...

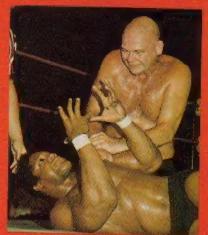


Tony Atlas Own Story:
"I WANTED TO KILL
BARON VON RASCHKE!"

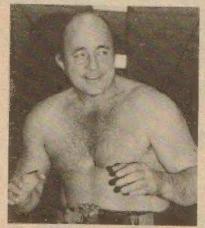
Bugsy McGraw's Letter To Don Muraco:
DUMP HUMPERDINK, NOW!



Battle At The Superdome:
THE PAINFUL FRUSTRATIONS
OF TED DIBIASE



PRO SELIMO ILLUSTRATED



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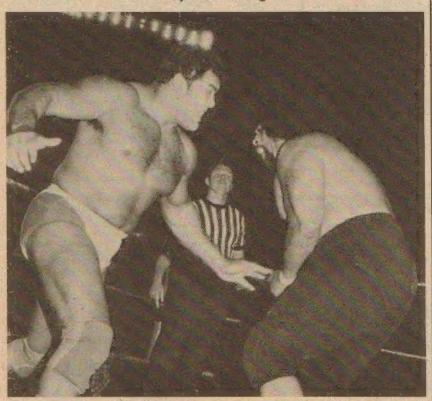
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PETER RING Editor in Chief
ROBERT J. INCHNION
Managing Editor
GART MURGENS IEIN
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Typesetting

By Peter King



Pedro Morales lands a left-right combination enroute to capturing the WWF tag team championship with Bob Backlund. The Samoans were not unbeatable, as many experts had thought. The vicious duo was beaten in straight falls.

News Story: Backlund and Morales Give Up **WWF Tag Team Belts**

No wrestling story in recent vears has spawned as many rumors as the Backlund-Morales affair. One rumor claims Pedro Morales is very upset that Bob Backlund | Another rumor, far more

decided he couldn't defend his half of the WWF tag team title. The rumor goes on to say that Morales feels Backlund double-crossed him, knowing ahead of the bout against the Samoans that Bob would never have the time to defend two belts.

vicious than the first one, says the man behind the alleged double-cross was Backlund's manager Arnold Skoaland. Supposedly, Skoaland has carried a grudge against Morales ever since Pedro's championship days. The story claims Skoaland hates Morales because Pedro chose Gorilla Monsoon as his championship advisor, not Skoaland. The rumor concludes that Skoaland tried to get even by having Backlund team with Morales, win the tag team belts, then have Bob resign, leaving Morales a confused and embarrassed man.



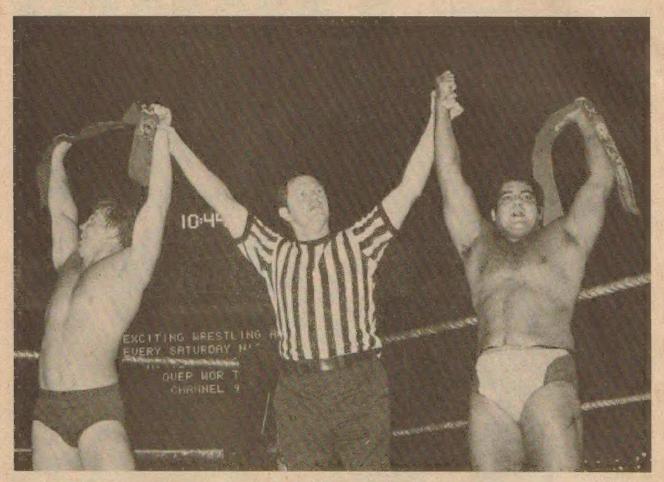
Arnold Skoaland, believing that Bob Backlund could not devote enough time to two titles, suggested Backlund forfeit the tag team title.

I have carefully researched both rumors, and there is no truth to either of them. Pedro Morales and Bob Backlund remain the best of friends. Said Pedro: "I understand fully. You know, I was once WWF champion also. To tell the truth, I suggested to Bobby that he give up the tag team belt. Believe me, it would be an impossibly heavy load for Bobby to defend both belts."

(Continued on page 64)

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter



BOB BACKLUND AND Pedro Morales, the men who beat the Samoans for the WWF tag team championship, are going to give up the belts.

"I've got to give up my half of the tag team title," Bob told reporters. "My manager, Arnold Skoaland, and I have come to realize that I just don't have enough time to devote to defending the tag team title. If Pedro wants to keep his half and find another partner, it's okay with me."

Morales has decided that if

Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales soak up the cheers of the 40,671 Shea Stadium fans following their straight falls victory over the Samoans.

Backlund gives up his half—Pedro will give up his. "I won the title with Bobby," says Pedro "If he cannot be my partner, I don't want anyone else." A tournament will be run to determine new WWF kings.

AWA rumors' persist that champion Verne Gagne may want to retire his championship! Gagne, who won the title from Nick Bockwinkel several months ago, is

pondering the decision now. AWA officials tell us that if Verne does indeed give up the title (to possibly go into semi-retirement) they will hold a tournament for the vacated belt.

Mid-Atlantic Heavyweight champion Hussein Arab is now being managed full-time by Genc Anderson. Anderson is also the manager of NWA tag team champions Ray Stevens and Jimmy Snuka... The sensational Chavo Guerrero, fresh off a great

(Continued on page 54)

By Stu Saks

ARRY ZBYSZKO'S PRE-BOUT analysis of Bruno Sammartino was so convincing, it hurt. "Bruno," he said before a vast television audience, "was a great wrestler in the '60s. He was a fair wrestler in the '70s. But this is the '80s. Bruno Sammartino is washed up. This decade belongs to the new Living Legend, Larry Zbyszko."

The words had a numbing effect. They were not your typical "psyche your opponent out" insults. They brought out in the open the thoughts that many of Bruno's most loyal supporters had begun to have for the past few years. The day would come when Bruno Sammartino would have to call it quits. Wrestling would have to survive without its greatest, just as boxing has had to survive without Muhammad Ali.

Bruno Sammartino made his wrestling debut in 1959, and since that time, he has battled only the sport's most punishing, ferocious rulebreakers. The toll has been incredible. If asked, he would not be able to tell you how many broken bones he has sustained or how many pints of blood he has spilled. Incredibly, he has not slowed down in the ring. He could still handle a 300-pound giant, even if he is half his age. Which only makes matters more difficult.

How do you tell a man to consider retirement when he is still at the top of his profession?



Bruno Sammartino is led down the ringsteps by referee John Stanley and manager Arnold Skoaland following his cage match victory before 40,671 fans at New York's Shea Stadium.

Especially when he carries the appropriate label "Living Legend." But even his most loyal supporters feared the night when Bruno's body would resent the punishment and refuse to fight back. Bruno's mind would say fight on, but the message would not be received by the muscles. He would be severely injured and disgraced.

That's the way Larry Zbyszko pictured Bruno would be following their Shea Stadium cage match, and he made the public—and especially Bruno—aware of it, "Bruno," he said, "I don't want to hurt an old man, but if I have to humiliate you to get you out of wrestling, that's what I'll do."

To Bruno, Zbyszko's remarks were slanderous. So he went on

television with a startling announcement. "You don't say things like that. Through the years, I have seen many wrestlers get old. but I had the decency to mind my own business. If a wrestler is too old to defend himself, he'll be the first to know. You know, that creep says my mind is no good any more, that my body is decrepit. Well, let me tell you this. I say this for all my fans and I say this for Larry Zbyszko: if I lose this match I will retire from wrestling. As far as the fans are concerned. I will disappear from the face of the Earth. You will never see Bruno Sammartino again."

Privately, Bruno told me why he made such a bold statement. "Once (Continued on page 55)

ASSIGNMENT STEVEN FARHOOD ASSIGNMENT

THAD BEEN a tough month. The Yankees had been swept by the Orioles and my bookie was paying for his daughter's piano lessons with my hard-earned money. The jockey whom I depend on for my "can't lose" tips was indicted by a grand jury. And my mother's cat died. Everyone was wearing black.

The destination was Damascus, Syria. I was going to spend three days in the Sheik's homeland.

After two Cokes and four pieces of brown licorice, I settled down and tried to put everything in perspective. Damascus is far away. The Sheik is a wild, unpredictable character. I came to the obvious

sandstorms," were Brock's parting words.

The flight seemed like it took 12 days. By the time I got off the plane, I had memorized Airline magazine and the names of every stewardess on board. I was also a nervous wreck. The Sheik knew I was coming. But how would he react?

The infamous grappler and his interpreter were at the airport to pick me up. The Sheik actually had a half-smile on his face.

"The Sheik would like to welcome you to his country," the interpreter said. "He rarely cooperates with the press in the United States, but here he will be different. It is custom to treat visitors with respect and friendship here. Now you will find out what this misunderstood man is really like,"

I felt a whole lot better. At least I wouldn't have to worry about waking up with fireballs burning my bed.

The first thing I learned in Damascus is that the Sheik is a national hero of incredible magnitude. In America, one child may idolize Reggie Jackson while another worships Julius Erving. In Syria, there is only one athlete of distinction: The Sheik.

The Sheik lives modestly. His home is plain and small, though it is on a street where there are no beggars or poor.

"I live a quiet life here, very different from my experiences (Continued on page 56)



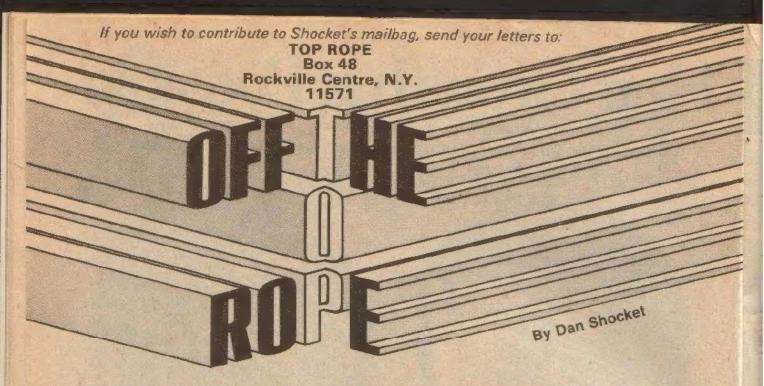
After Steve Farhood broke his fourth typewriter in two weeks, Editor-in-Chief Peter King felt he should take a small trip. Farhood was sent to Damascus, Syria, where he obtained an exclusive, revealing interview with The Sheik.

I was tired and moody. I figured my bosses, the usually-merciful Peter King and the venerable Matt Brock, would send me somewhere close on my monthly journey. Maybe Pittsburgh to visit Bruno Sammartino. Or Mount Vernon to spend a day with the always-quotable Louis Albano. But no. They handed me a plane ticket.

conclusion: My bosses were trying to get me killed.

Like it or not, I had to go. I happen to be of Lebanese descent, so the Arab culture is not foreign to me. After a half-hour talk with my grandmother—she told me what to pack, whom to look up, and what not to say to whom—I was ready to go.

"Don't get caught in any



BEFORE WE BEGIN this month's column, it seems necessary to remind you once again that I will print NO letter that ends, "I dare you to print this!" Letters are printed for their quality, not the fact the writer can string six one-syllable words in a childish if grammatical sentence.

Dear Dan Shocket.

I would like to say, "Right on!" Keep on making those great predictions. I know there are a lot of sick wrestling fans out there eating their words after saying Ivan Putski and Tito Santana are the greatest. I also predicted the Samoans would pulverize those two morons, because they have one of the greatest managers in wrestling history, Lou Albano.

I hear Pedro Morales and Tony Atlas will team and go after the Samoans' WWF tag team title. If so, who do you think will win? I hope you say the Samoans.

> STEPHEN SULLIVAN Samoans' Fan

Dear Stephen Sullivan,

As of now, I can't see any tag team beating the Samoans. As for Morales and Atlas, I can't



take any tag team seriously that needs a third person to tie their shoes.

Mr. Shocket.

I am against wrestlers who do not stay within a fair margin of the rules. My one exception is Ken Patera.

I didn't like Patera from what I read in wrestling magazines. Then Ken came to St. Louis and I got a chance to observe his style. On a scale from one to 10, I give him an eight.

One more thing. In your opinion, are Bruiser and Crusher what you'd call "aggressive" wrestlers?

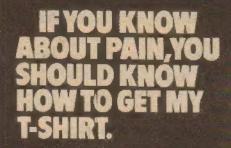
RICH SOFORTH Barnhart, MO Ken Patera severely bruised Kevin Von Erich's ribs with his tremendous drive across the knee. Reader Rich Soforth dislikes all rulebreakers but Patera.

Mr. Soforth,

I've said many times that Ken Patera can't be truly appreciated until he's seen in person. He is one of those special athletes whose talents can never be captured by photographs or film.

As for Bruiser and Crusher, of course they're aggressive wrestlers. I may not agree with their choice of opponents, but everyone must respect them for wrestling as they want.

(Continued on page 57)



ABOUT PAIN

Dusty Rhodes knows about pain. You do too.
He also knows Stanback Powders make pain go away fast. So do you.
But Dusty has a special Stanback T-shirt that says he knows those things. And now you can get a T-shirt just like his for yourself.
Just fill out this coupon and mail it to Stanback along with the box top from any package of Stanback Powder 50's and \$4.95. Then we'll mail you your very own 'I can tell you about pain" Stanback T-shirt.

It's a deal any way you look at it. You'll have plenty of Stanback to fight pain, fever and inflammation. Fast. Plus a terrific T-shirt that will get everyone's attention. Fast.

I've enclosed _____box top(s) from the package(s) of Stanback Powder 50's and \$ _____(\$4.95 each including postage and handling) for

Address_____

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Mail to: Stanback Co. LTD P.O. Box 1669 Salisbury, N.C. 28144

Allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. This offer subject to withdrawal without notice.

THE ORNESSEE OF THE OFFICE OF

By Gary Morgenstein

RHODES DESERVES CREDIT

Titles and championships gather unwarranted importance in professional sports. Sometimes the mere possession of a diamond-studded belt obscures sinister motives or actually condones venemous rulebreaking tactics. On the other hand, a wrestler who fails to win a title or doesn't manage a lengthy reign suffers a stigma obscuring excellent skills and decent character traits. Dusty Rhodes, the American Dream, has labored under such burdens long enough. What real difference does it make how long Rhodes holds a title or whether he ever wins another major championship? Can the word "champion" compare with Rhodes'



qualities of fairness, kindness, and concern for the well-being of both fans and fellow grapplers? Absolutely not. Focus upon Rhodes' brilliant style, clever wit, and loyalty to his peers rather than any black-and-white judgement of his relative title successes. If not, a great wrestler is done a great disservice.

II TO TEAM?

According to high-level sources within the Georgia wrestling scene, Mr. Wrestling Il is seriously considering finding a suitable tag team partner to beat back the menaceful challenge of present Georgia tag team champions, The Masked Assassins. In the past, Il has refrained from teaming on a regular basis, instead concentrating on his marvelous individual game. Yet the repeated brutality exhibited by The Masked Assassins apparently drove II to conduct a search for the right partner. At the moment, Tommy Rich, Kevin Sullivan and two others. not revealed, are under active consideration.

NOW WHAT, NICK BOCKWINKEL?



No other wrestler has fascinated me in the manner of former NWA champion Nick Bockwinkel. I look for Bockwinkel to seek even greater heights of evil ambition after his disputed loss to Verne Gagne While Bockwinkel and manager Bobby Heenan remain loudly vague on future plans, I have a feeling these sadistic geniuses may be plotting a course of action which would make their violent five-year AWA title reign lame by comparison.



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BETWEEN

Pro Wrestling Illustrated welcomes your comments on any of our stories or columns. Send your letters to:

PWI Box 48 Bockville Centr

Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571



GET SERIOUS

The World Ratings in the September issue simply turned my stomach. Dusty Rhodes number two challenger? Get serious. That overweight, obese, horrid, over-the-hill pig should be barred from wrestling. I don't know about the other two associations, but the NWA rankings are definitely wrong.

As for the so-called Most Popular ratings, it's ridiculous. Where's Austin Idol? You can't be serious when you leave out the American Heartthrob. How much did Wahoo McDaniel pay PWI to have his name on the list

Reader Doug Jones questions the absence of Austin Idol and the presence of Wahoo McDaniel (above) in the September "Most Popular" ratings.

and picture in the book instead of Idol?

DOUG JONES Russell, KY

STEVENS WONDERFUL?

I want to comment on the greatest wrestler of all-time, Ray Stevens. I think the wrestling magazines don't give this man enough publicity. He, along with partner Jimmy Snuka, are NWA tag team champs and yet you still

pay more attention to the hasbeen champs who don't stand a chance of regaining the belts, Jay Youngblood and Rick Steamboat,

Stevens is a wonderful person and a really nice guy, besides being one heckuva professional wrestler and a true champion in every sense of the word.

> RALPH HARKEY Gastonia, NC

UNDERSTAND LARRY

I thought I was alone sticking by the new Living Legend, Larry Zbyszko. But after reading "Looking at . . . Larry Zbyszko" (September 1980) by Matt Brock, I realized at least one other person is intelligent enough to understand Larry.

Larry did what he had to do, end all the pains and frustrations. Now everyone sees how much better he is than Bruno. No one likes that, so they boo him. Fans, give him a chance, he's a real champ. You're a fine guy, Larry, and a great wrestler.

BRENDA HAMMOND No. Haven, CT

Matt Brock deserves a hand. I'm referring to his column on Larry Zbyszko in the September issue. I agree with him totally. Brock put into words what I had been trying to explain since the beginning of Larry's ordeal. I cannot condone what Larry has done, but I do understand and accept it.

I think Larry deserves some consideration. And he certainly doesn't deserve to be the



Larry Zbyszko (above) is not without fan support. Readers Brenda Hammond and Pam Fischer both commend Matt Brock for his fair portrayal of Larry in his September column. Reader Kathy Smith feels that Harley Race (below) cannot defend his title within the bounds of the rulebook.



number one hated wrestler in the world. I hope Larry's former fans will read Brock's column and give him the support he needs. Larry will always have me as a fan, and now, so will Matt Brock.

> PAM FISCHER Marion, OH

INFURIATED

I am infuriated at Bryant Boyko's comments in the September issue concerning Greg Valentine. I have seen Valentine wrestle many times in the past two years and when he gets into the ring, his opponents turn into mush. Valentine's form of mindless viciousness applied with correct knowledge and ability sets a good example for wrestling. As for Steamboat and Youngblood, they're a pair of worthless bums who show no courage or stamina.

Greg Valentine probably had a good reason for smacking Crockett, and I surely don't blame him. In my opinion, Valentine should team up with really solid, vicious tough guys like Leroy Brown or Ernie Ladd who'll be there for him in sticky situations

MARK ANDERSEN Mercer Island, WA

RACE NOT FAIR

In your August issue, Carl Smith wrote that Harley Race is the greatest champion the NWA ever had. He also stated none alive could take the title from Race fairly. Well, I disagree. Race is the one who isn't a fair wrestler. Not in the sense of throwing chairs and things like that, but whenever Race is in trouble, he tries to climb out of the ring as soon as he possibly can. The real reason Race has been champion for so long is because he's too chicken to get into the ring and really fight.

KATHY SMITH Reane, TX □

Every month, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star.

The questions will be demanding.

And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport





(His corpulent figure and bearded face inspire contempt and fear within Florida wrestling circles. Whatever his brutal tactics and treacherous ways, Sir Oliver Humperdink cannot be denied gruding acknowledgement for his sinister achievements. By harnessing a stable of top Florida rulebreakers, Humperdink stands on the verge of wrestling supremacy. In this interview, which Humperdink vous will be his last, Editor-in-Chief Peter King and Associate Editors Steve Farhood and Dan Shocket question the man many fear will soon rule wrestling.)

"We want to cleanse the sport of such evil influences like Dusty Rhodes and Manny Fernandez. We're performing a public service by getting those bums and their hired thugs like Bugsy McGraw and Steve Keirn the hell outta wrestling."







PETER KING: Ohver, I'd . . . SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK: It's Mr. Humperdink to you fools.

KING: Whatever. Earlier you vowed never to grant another interview to the press. Why did you relent and agree to this press conference?

HUMPERDINK: Because of Dan Shocket's presence. He's the only journalist I can trust and with him here, I know you'll be half-way fair.

DAN SHOCKET: Sir, your faith is justified and appreciated. STEVE FARHOOD: Why won't you grant anymore interviews?

HUMPERDINK: Because the press has hounded and misquoted me, accusing me and my

men of crimes we never committed and of evil intentions we don't have.

KING: What are your aims? HUMPERDINK: We want to cleanse the sport of such evil influences like Dusty Rhodes and Manny Fernandez. We're performing a public service by getting those bums and their hired thugs like Bugsy McGraw and Steve Keirn the hell outta

FARHOOD: And what of your tactics?

HUMPERDINK: What of them?

SHOCKET: Sir, perhaps an explanation of your tactics would shed light upon your true and noble aims, hke the provocation instigated by

Gordon Solie.

HUMPERDINK: Solie violated my constitutional right to privacy by sneaking in a camera to film private training sessions. Obviously McGraw paid off Solie, who doesn't own a mind of his own, to try and gather slanted information to blackmail us. It won't work.

KING: Is that why you attacked Solie?

HUMPERDINK: It was in self-defense. Solie's been after me for a long time. I know he and Rhodes are pooling money to form an army to get me. Well, it won't work, hear? One of my boys, with both hands tied behind his back, a real man like Don Muraco or Nikolai

(Continued on page 50)

OU REMEMBER HOW it al started, don't you. Ted

You remember that first night you turned on the tube and those little black-and-white figures sped across the screen battering and pummeling each other like toy tigers. You remember the chills racing up and down your spine, don't you Ted DiB ase?

You were hooked and proud to admit it. Your boyish walls grew wrestling pictures, and suddenly, one birthday, you woke up and a set of weights rested by your bed. You were 12 and you and the weights became best buddles, night after night straining and wheezing to build the adolescent muscles into steel bars and the sunken chest into a cliff-like protrusion of grizzled rock. And with each heave of your best friend, the dream came closer to reality. You were



Battle At The Superdome: into someone's leftover meat loaf. You didn't count on that.

You learned there was more to this wacky sport than that. You learned about the bruises and scars and the pints of blood left on some fifthy mat in some one-horse town in the middle of nowhere You learned all that and thought that was it, the dues you had to pay to make t to the top, didn't you, Ted DiBiase?

But you hadn't been introduced to disappointment yet. That was something you couldn't tear off a little boy's wall or lug by your bedside. That was something which gnaws at your gut and nibbles on your dream, spitting back the hopes onto your plate until the big steak and potatoes turns did you, Ted DiBiase?

You didn't know how it changed you. Or did you? Maybe you didn't want to notice the subtle changes in your

PAINFUL FRUSTRATIONS OF TED DIBIASE

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

going to make it, weren't you, Ted DiBiase?

You hung around the arenas and the gyms like a desperate stray, knowing someday you would be the main event. You sweated and strained and lugged those weights and practiced your imperfect, amateurish moves until you knew you were ready. You thought it was going to be easy from there. You thought a wide pair of shoulders and a handsome face and an engaging grin and a dream were enough, didn't you, Ted DiBiase?



Ted DiBiase's battle with Mr. Wrestling II was a classic. DiBiase applies a headlock (top) and drops across Il's leg (above).

style, the harsh undercoating to your words, the blackening of your stare. You wanted to forget all that because you had a title within your grasp and no one would deny you that dream isn't that right, Ted DiBiase?

So you won the North American Heavyweight Championsh p, and you thought you were king. Look out Bob Backlund, move over Harley Race, guard yourself, Verne Gagne. You thought all the disappointments and at the dingy diner cheeseburgers were behind you, didn't you. Ted DiBiase?



Ted DiBiase always wanted to be the greatest scientific wrestler of all-time. He dreamt of the day he'd be acclaimed an all-time great. Yet in recent months DiBiase has taken to brawling near the end of bouts. Has the hopeless depths of frustration claimed yet another victim?





Total was a

You were wrong. The world title shot you thought you deserved never came and you! didn't knew what to do, never had the dream blow up in your face and wipe the insides off your eyelids, did you, Ted DiBiase? You grew sul en, then angry, then bitter. You wanted that belt so much the taste paid rent in your mouth. You fought and warred and screamed and did anything you could but that title shot never came. And you wouldn't accept that, would you, Ted DiBiase?

Your once-bri.tiant scientific maneuvers hardened by bitterness, your rage shadowing your intellect, and your brutal human instincts pounded at the door of your heart. You didn't know it then but you were becoming one of us, ready to do whatever was needed to be done to win. No matter the cost, you were going to win, weren't

DiBiase applies a footlock (above left) and then, still holding the foot, dives across II's prone body (above right). DiBiase retained his North American belt (below) when he was disqualified for accidentally throwing II over the top rope



you, Ted DiBiase?

You had a chance of a lifetime to show you were different, to prove to all the important people and then yourself you could control the animals in your belly. You wrestled a man whose seen it all, Mr. Wrestling II it didn't work, did it, Ted D.Biase?

Your clean match degenerated into a brawl, and when you'd suffered the shame of a disqualification, you came back to the dressing room and tried to figure where it all went what happened to the clean-cut little kid who was going to be the very best clean wrestler in the world and why this bitter young man sat in his shoes and muttered how he always wrestled cleanly. Why wouldn't he stop when he was this close to a title?

Welcome to the club, Ted D Biase? There's no exit.

WHAT SAYING THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

BRUNG SAMMARTING I

"Once upon a time, I felt sorry for that Larry Zbyszko. I thought he was going through a phase. But now I realize how dangerous he has become and how I must stop him. I cannot go to sleep at night worrying what he will do to others if he gets the power. Well, doggone, he won't. I'll drive him out of wrestling, I promise."



MICK BOCKWINKEL -

"So I lost the belt. It wasn't as if I was defeated in a fair match. Not only did Gagne use illegal tactics to steal my belt, he paid off the referee to look the other way when he choked me and nearly killed me. I'm not worried. At Gagne's age, he has only a few good title defenses left. Then I'll regain the belt. If I still want it."



DUSTY RHODES

"That slime Ole Anderson turned his back on all of us, wrestlers, fans, and country, and he ain't gonna get away with that, no sir. I'm fed up to here with dudes turning on people and thinkin' that's okay. Maybe some people ain't got the guts to correct these traitors, but Dusty Rhodes sure does. I'll pulverize Anderson."



DON MURACO

"Wouldn't it be nice if the idiots accusing me of using a piledriver would take the time to open their idiotic eyes and force their retarded brains to closely look at what I do? If they did, they'd understand how brilliant and creative I am in devising the Asian Hammer, the greatest maneuver ever."



(Continued on page 49)



After five years of spiritual slavery under the reign of champion Nick Bockwinkel, AWA fans concerned about the quality of their wrestling can rejoice: Verne Gagne is the new AWA champ. In his own words, Verne describes his emotions proceto, during, and after the historic championship match



By Verne Gagne

YOU'D LIKE TO know how I feel, right? Well, I feel about yay close to Heaven, that's how good I feel It's been a long five years suffering at the sight of Nick Bockwinkel wearing my title and bringing disgrace to the AWA and wrestling.

I've been angry for a long while. It has nothing to do with ego That's a refreshing change of attitude for an AWA champion, right? Really, I wanted to be champion occause I believed I was the best wrester around. But that's not an econstical statement. Any man who competes in as

grueling a sport as wrestling must believe he's the best. If you don't think you're the best, why bother wrestling or doing anything. You must shoot for the top in any endeavor.

And I don't mean being a cutthroat and ruthless. You can do your very best and still be a gentleman I've tried to follow that philosophy as best I can and I'm the first to admit my temper's got the best of me on a few occasions. I'm not proud of that, but I have given it my all.

But watching Bockwinkel debase the word "champion"

infuriated me. Here's a man bragging about how he cheats and breaks the rules, how he runs from trouble to get himself disqualified, and has a parasitic manager like Bobby Heenan feeding him further poisons. This is the man kids everywhere are supposed to look up to?

I reached the decision that Bockwinkel was a burn a long time ago, yet feared letting all my rage loose lest I go crazy and do something I'd be ashamed of. Finally, I'd had enough. I couldn't take the way this plastic champion

(Continued on page 52)



Exclusive Photos: DUSTY RHODES WARESTLES BOB BACKLUND... FOR THE WWWF TH



There are many critical differences between Japan and America, not the least being the difference in certain wrestling rules. Dusty Rhodes learned. much to his dismay, what happens when you accidentally hit a referee. Despite his protests, there are no grounds for appeal in Japanese grappling circles

ITLE !!!

(Editor's Note: One of the most classic wrestling battles of all time took place recently in Tokyo, Japan. Matchmaker Masashi Ito outbid every top promoter in the world to bring the Bob Backhind-Dusty Rhodes WWF title match to the island nation. The repercussions of this titanic clash between two of wrestling's most respected scientific stars was fell everywhere in the world. The following is a ringside report by Masanori Murikanii, one of Japan's finest wrestling journalists.)

By Masanori Murikami Special Correspondent

OKYO—AFTER 25 MINUTES of a hotly contested WWF title match, challenger Dusty Rhodes attempted a forearm smash upon champion Bob Back . . . hroat. The young char p - stepped aside and Rhad as a mad into the referee I nder the wrestling rules,

PHOTOS BY WALLY YAMAGUCHI



hitting the referee, no matter how unintentional, invokes automatic disqualification.

"I never meant to hit that ref and it's a lousy thievery I gotta miss my chance to win the title on some cheap rule like that," shouted Rhodes after the bout, "It's one thing when I get disqualified because some punk cheats and blames me, hell, I can handle that

"What gets my goat is when I'm on the verge of winnin' and some garbage stunt like this is pulled on me," shouted Rhodes, "Well, they ain't gonna get away with this, understand?"

Scientific wrestling maneuvers dominated the even bout. Rhodes and Backlund exchanged slick, fluid maneuvers. Early in the match, Backlund set Rhodes up with an array of sizzling strength-speed moves, attempting to finish Rhodes off with his patented atomic spinecrusher

"I'd rather not wait around with an opponent as dangerous as Dusty Rhodes," explained Backlund

Unfortunately for Backlund.

Rhodes has a firm grip on the WWF champion's face

Rhodes anticipated the finishing blow and adroitly sidestepped Backlund's battering rush

Once Backland failed in his initial obliterating attempt. Rhodes seized temporary control. Dusty tried to set up Backland as the game of cat-and-mouse intensified. Utilizing speed, Backland skipped aside from one Rhodes' blow, yet The American Dream landed heavily to the body with a forearm smash.

All the arena could see Rhodes was , wangling and maneuvering Backland into position for his famous bionic elbowsmash So did Backland

"When Rhodes gets ready to deliver his bionic elbow, he brings his left leg back and crouches. That's a dead give-away," said Backlund "I watch a lot of films on all my opponents so as to minimize being surprised."

Several minutes of fierce grappling followed these two failed elbowsmash attempts. Each man struggled to gain precious position and tip his foe off-balance

"Infighting's gotta be the most difficult part of wrestlin" to master," said Rhodes, "You can't teach anyone that, you can't learn it in the gym, it just builds up over the years and comes with a lot of experience and a lot of bruises

"I don't like to brag, but I think I'm the best in the business when it comes to gettin' inside a man's defenses," continued Rhodes. "You gotta be fearless, be able to take that first series of blows and keep on comin'. All great wrestlers got that sixth sense about infightin'."

Backlund didn't seem fazed by Rhodes self-proclaimed mastery.

"Rhodes is okay, heck, I always admired the Dream and he knows that I don't feel we have a real rivalry, surely not the kind of rivalry where you hate the guy.

"I consider wrestling Rhodes a real challenge and something I really look forward to. I like Rhodes because you never know what to expect from him, whether he'll blast you away with a rough clean move or try to topple you with a brilliant scientific maneuver.

"I have the greatest admiration for Dusty Rhodes. Though I won, it's kind of a shame it had to end in a disqualification."



Perhaps Baron Von Raschke thought Tony Atlas was like all the rest, fearful of standing up to his foul and disgusting mouth. Recently Von Raschke learned otherwise. Atlas won't take any guff from anyone. Even if it means killing Baron Von Raschke

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS

TONY ATLAS IS normally a placid, polite young man. Violent threats and barbed insults simply aren't his style. To provoke Atlas to rage means the instigator committed some heinous crime aimed at Atlas' very sou.

Baron Von Raschke found Atlas' sensitive area. And Von Raschke may not live to regret it

"I wanted to kill Baron Von Raschke," thundered Atlas. He stormed around the dressing room, kicking over chairs and flinging towels onto the floor. He could barely contain his rage. Atlas flung himself on a rickety chair and glowered at the wall.

"Why he gotta act like that, huh? Why he gotta be like that and say I'm an inferior person and I am't good enough to get into the ring with him? Why he gotta do that? Just ain't right, am't right, that's all. and I don't have to take it," snarled Atlas, twisting his enormous hands

At first, Atlas refused to discuss Von Raschke's remarks. When questioned, Atlas' eyes bu ged and his huge chest heaved with distress. Long pained silence followed reporters' questions. Several times, Atlas started to explain, only to stumble on his words

"It's, I just, you know, it really

hurts to talk about, I, I get so darn mad. I wanna crush and kill, you know, I, I ... Atlas tore at a towel "I, just gimme a few minutes, just a few seconds, okay?"

Atlas disappeared into the shower. For nearly 20 minutes, roaring water combined with his tormented mumbing. The room full of writers felt awkward

Atlas returned, water dripping from his thick muscles. Much of the anger was gone, displaced by a worn fury

"I wanna apologize for my behavior, wasn't right, really," said Atlas. "Don't matter how bad I

(Continued on page 62)

Tony Atlas:

"I WANTED TO KILL BARON VON RASCHKE!"







MATCHES"

BY BILL APTER

rampa, FL—Dusty Rhodes is finished wrestling NWA champion Harley Race In one of the strongest statements ever leveled by a top challenger, Rhodes vowed 101 to seek the NWA other as long as Race is champion.

"Ain't no way I'm ever gonna bother with that bum. You got the Dream's word on this," said

Rhodes after another trustrating time limit draw in which he won the first fall, drew the second, and seeming viciaimed the belt only to have the referce return the NWA title to Race

Race's reaction?

"Who says the turkey woulda got another shot," Race said. "He's had his chances. Now it's time for someone deserving to wrestle for my belt."



THE DREAM LNDS Dusty Rhodes announced that he will not challenge for the NWA championship while Harley Race holds the belt.

overes with that outh, rou got the Dream's word on this," said

time for someone deserving to wrestle for my beit,"

THE DREAM FROS Busty Rhodes approunced that he will not challenge to the NWA champion flower to be new Races nokils the best

Abdullah Goes

BY PETER KING

never placid. But even veteran ATLANTA, GA-An evening with Abdullah the Butcher is Butcher watchers were appalled at his deranged behavior in the Omni

While wrestling Stan Hansen. Abdullah was assaulted by former friend Mark Lewin. Abdullah pounded Lewin, Mephisto back to the dressing He seized spectators at ringside Abdullah's massive hands found a referee's neck. Finally, in a shocking display of brutahty, Abdullah assaulted a professional photographer, nearly sending him and manager Great room, Then Abdullah went wild and flung them several rows back. knocking out his false teeth.

Battle in Texas Heartpunch

BY GARY MORGENSTEIN

their paths.

HOUSTON, TX-It was a battle of the Heartpunch experts as Stan Stasiak and Ox Baker met in one of wrestling's most dreaded bouts. All fans are aware of the Fueling its fatal potential was the lethal power of the Heartpunch immense hatred each man felt.

"I'll punch his chest out," "That bum stole my maneuver," snarled Baker.

Blonds.

warned Stasiak.

When the dust settled, Stasiak backed up his words with a win.

Uraws 41,000 Shea Stadium



Morales and current champion Bob Backland united to capture the WWF Lag team fittle from the Samoans TEAM OF CHAMPIONS Former WWF champion Pedro

Roberts & Gordy Continue Terror Reign

PLUSHING, NY - The largest crowd ever to attend a professional wrestling match crammed Shea Stadium. None of the 40,671 fans was disappointed TAVE THE CH

Bob Backlund and Pedro Morales blended both scientific wrestling and shrewd, physical toughness to upset the hated Samoans, for the WWF tag team title. Fans went wild as Backlund and Morales paraded the belts

In the featured steel cage bout between rivals Bruno Sammartino and Larry Zbyszko, Sammartino left the ring a pantomined finger slice across his throat, the Italian signal for the blood flowed like wine. bloody Zbyszko with a winner, dismissing the equally "Kiss of Death."

hearing Tommy Rich's announcement who vowed to leave the territory if he could not beat NWA champion Tennessee his wrestling home base Harley Race in Atlanta, now calls that he is leaving Georgia Rich, Fans are in deep despair after

IOS ANGELES, CA

started by John Tolos. Mascaras, who coast of the "Tolos cerse," as Mil put it legendary Mil Mascaras with hopes had a bitter rivairy with Tolos several years ago, promises to rid the west he can stop the reign of terror Promoters have contacted the

CHARLOTTE, NC

Ric Flare is having the most difficult time of his life trying to regain the United States title from Greg

history, is convinced that he is invincible Valentine. Valentine, who claims to be the greatest U.S. champion in

FLUSHING, NY

heaching Hulk Hogan how to use the Hansen go ng at Shea Stadium? And was he responsible in any way for What was "loriat" expert Stan ariat tactic on Andre the Giant?

HOUSTON, TX

Kerry Von Ench and El Halcon have unbeatable due. Already they have and Mr. Sakurada. Can a world tag taken the area title from Mr. Hito formed what appears to be an title be for off?



WANTED Buddy Roberts [above] and Ferry Gordy are booking for worthy challengers for their Louisiana State title

ANCIENT SECRET THAT MAKES HUSSEIN ARAB INVINCIBLE

Hussel Aras wall in the Mail Atlantic Heart weight hampionship

The Mail Atlantic Heart weight this Rul Arab

The Canadian Heart weight this Rul Arab

The Carolina State to the Carolinas to

to the Carolinas to unearth this Fightenian secret

HAD TO break some important commitments in order to make this trip. I thought about staying home, but the lure of the story proved too much for me. An opportunity to get the inside story on Hussein Arab was a once-in-a-lifetime journalistic opportunity and I wouldn't be true to my profession if I ignored this chance.

I'd received a call from an irate fan claiming he knew the secret to Hussein Arab's success. I'd like to digress for a second and explain how I handle fan tips. Unfortunately, I can't check out every single one personally. But I do follow up on every single lead, preferably by phone or, failing that, by a letter. But this tip intrigued me. I'd long wondered about Hussein Arab. And I'd long been fascinated by him. I feel he's the most underrated rulebreaker around.

As of this writing, Arab is both Mid-Atlantic and Canadian Heavyweight champion. In terms of pure unadulterated skill, he deserves both. In terms of character, or lack thereof, he should be stripped of those championships

championships.

But I didn't travel almost 500 miles to judge Arab. I was hot on the trail of a story. Hussein Arab's secret weapon, the ingredient which transforms a talented, albeit demented man into an overpowering human dynamo. According to the tipster, Arab's magic potion consisted of more than obsession or the right manager (in this instance, Gene Anderson). No the tipster swore Arab's boots contain the key.

While in the WWF, Arab was accused of doctoring his boots with everything from poison to grated desert sand. In the custom of other great Arab wrestlers like The Sheik,

(Continued on page 66)

19LL NEVER FORGET the first time I looked at Verne Gagne I, a rookie reporter covering the Summer Olympics for a major Ohio daily. It'd been a rough day and I was relaxing by the pool, surveying the London beauties trotting by when I spied this little boy squatting at the edge of the three-foot pool. He looked scared No parent seemed around Felt sorry for the little kid but I simply couldn't move after an exhausting afternoon covering the mindnumbing array of events. From nowhere, this muscled guy walks over to the kid and, with a big smile, helps him into the pool Before you know it, the little kid's laughing and chuckling as the athlete teaches him to swim

Never learned the kid's name, but went over to the athlete, vaguely, familiar, and started talking. His name was Verne Gagne. From that moment, we cultivated as close a friendship as a reporter can have with someone he must report objectively about.

I've watched all Gagne's triumphs and disappointments. When Gagne defeated Nick Bockwinkel for the AWA title. I



Verne Gagne stops in a corridor at Chicago's Comiskey Park to pase for photographers. Gagne has strong feelings for the belt he had been parted with for five years.

VERNE GAGNE





Gagne and Mad Dog Vachon were stripped of the AWA tag team titles when Verne failed to meet a wrestling commitment while defending his single title in Europe. The title was given to Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura, whom they were scheduled to wrestle

should've been elated. I wasn't. 1 was crushed, buried beneath the shards of shattered illusions

From my seat, I saw Verne Gaer, boiling over with despe . n. And I didn't like it

and ar real attempt to gain victory is q . . . thin, often a matter

of interpretation, Since I wasn't in the ring with Gagne and Bockwinkel, I can't say with utter confidence Gagne tried to chake Bockwinkel

Still, Gagne's conduct that night Ir between a legal hold doesn't rule out the possibility he tried something illegal against Bockwinkel. I've never seen Gagne so forceful, so determined, so obsessed with victory as he was that evening in Comiskey Park. I confess to instant elation in the dressing room I confess I submerged these thoughts until much later, when, confronted by the hard evidence contradicting a carefully cultivated concept of a good friend, I realized what really happened.

Verne Gagne doesn't need desperation. He shouldn't tarnish his legend, blemish the great moments and inspirations in wrestling he's grown famous for. To Verne Gagne, the title is almost secondary to the greatness and style he's forged during his long career. Verne Gagne's too good to bother with anything short of dignified wrestling. Gagne shouldn't brawl. Leave such tactics for less talented men unable to marshal the inherent skills of a Gagne

I fear repeated defenses against Bockwinkel will lure Gagne down a violent path at variance with his past. If so, success will have claimed vet another victim, a man who has meant so much to so many, and whose grace and decency has touched and effected the entire sport.

Bugsy McGraw's Letter To Don Muraco

DUMP HUMPERDINK, NOW!

The following is a carbon copy of a letter written by Bugsy McGraw to Don Muraco, Bugsy sent it to us because he wishes the fans to know about it. We reprint it in its entirety. As of press time, Don Muraco has refused to comment on the letter

Dear Don.

LLAL MINING TOWN

These are tough times every me you my to make a easer by being managed by Oliver Humperdink. I four that's the hardest way of all.

You have to leave the hunker of the light only in how much money of can make for himself. He'll use of our hor runs you he said manager, He's an explorer even a murderer. He isnow to be in wrestling

Do you read want to be eng to the same state that house. Ivan Koloff and Noon No katter. These guys would be no necessary decent man just to great a minor victory. You will a

What Humperdink wants so turn you into another one of them. He'll do it little by little so cute you won't know what's happening. Then, one morning you wake up and find yourself a Humperdink robot. He owns the best of you. All that's yours is



the dregs.

I know what I'm talking about, Humperdink tried to destroy me. The rat was using me to test his strategies. He didn't care that my career could get ruined. He said he was doing it for me. He was really sacrificing me to test his strategies for Koloff and Volkoff

how those bums wrestle. They use every successful maneuver Humperdink ever taught me. Also look at their new stuff. Look familiar? You bet! It's your maneuvers, the ones you've tested at the risk of your career. You don't see them taking any risks for you.

I know just how the rat You know it's true. Look at Humperdink does it. "Don," he

says, his fat face all innocence, "how badly do you want to win? Because I've got some maneuvers here that could make you NWA king, NWA king! But you can't get to the top without risks.

"Don," he'll continue, his voice getting loud and serious, "I can make you king! Sure, these are tough maneuvers to master. Sure, they could get you hurt. But they could also make you a king! They could make you a legend in your time! The world would bow at your feet,"

Sound familiar? You heard it straight from the lackal's mouth. just as I did. And just like I did, you're now learning those maneuvers. They're dangerous, aren't they. You wake up in the morning feeling like a truck ran over you. That's because all the "great" new strateg es don't always work. Sometimes, you get it right in the teeth.

The next day, Humperdink tells you to stay away from the gym. He says you need rest. Yeah, and the Arabs need oil. He wants you away from the gym because he's teaching Koloff and Volkoff your best maneuvers. Of course, he's not teaching them the ones that you were unsuccessful with. Humperdink knows they don't work. But you've got the scars to prove it

I'm writing this because it's not too late for you to wise up. You can still save your career. Humperdink doesn't own you, no matter what he says. Yeah, he threatened to run you out of wrestling if I broke my contract. Well, I'm still around. He can't do a thing to me. He can't do a



Sir Oliver Humperdink tries to push Barry Windham back into the ring so Don Muraco can continue his onslaught in an open letter, Bugsy McGraw pleads with Muraco to dump Humperdink.

Once again, Bugsy McGraw demonstrates the depth of his decency. Despite Don Muraco's persistent vicious attacks on McGraw, both physically and emotionally, Bugsy refuses to hold a grudge. In this frank letter, Bugsy McGraw insists Muraco change his ways . . . before it's too late PHOTOS BY BILL APTER & PAUL BAUMAN





Humperdink bends Windhom's leg across the ringpost (above). Muraco kicks away as Windham is helplessly tangled in the ropes (left)

thing to you, either.

I got out in time. Humperdink learned his lesson, though. He's pushing you a tot faster than he pushed me. He's not giving you a chance to get wise. He's going to use you up quick and throw you away like dirty Kleenex

It's your decision. Your body is telling you there's not much time left. The aches aren't going away as quickly and the strain is beginning to show. Has Humperdink offered to give you a real rest? Of couse not!

Will you let Humperdink destroy you? He didn't make you Flor da champion. You got that in spite of him. The only ones who profit from Humperdink are Koloff and Volkoff.

It's your decision. There's not much time.

Your friend (though you don't know it), Bugsy McGraw

WALLESTON IN I YOU

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

(Continued from Page 29,

SENE AWUERSON ...

"I don't think anyone in wrestling can handle my championship tag team of Jimmy Snuka and Ray Stevens. They've got the best of all worlds, meanness, determination, strength, skills, and me. I almost feel sorry for Youngblood and Steamboat 'cause you know my men will wipe the floor with 'em."



DAVID VOW ERICH I

"Yeah, there's sort of a rivalry in the Von Erich family. It's impossible not to have some kinda rivalry with all of us in the sport. But it's nothing bad and I don't want anything distorted, akay? We all pull for one another and when one of us wins, it's like the whole family winning. And I think that's swell."



FABULOUS MOOLAH

"Darlin", I think the state of wrestling is just fine and dandy. Every day my little heart swells with joy at all the fine, upstandin' young men and women comin' up through the wrestlin' ranks. This is a great sport and I'm glad so many people love it the way I do."



ABBULLAH THE BUTCHER

(through an interpreter)

"How do you think I felt when I learned Mephisto!"
paid Lewin more than me? I am no dummy. I have great
business sense. What Mephisto did stunk and he will regret the
day he tried to burn me. I am unrelenting in vengeance.
He will pay for this treachery with his blood. I vow that upon
my forefathers."



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PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 25)



"You bums don't miss an opportunity to accuse me of something bad. Or one of my boys, like Don Muraco. We've offered to show films of all his matches before any impartial board to clear his good name of these scandalous charges that he uses a piledriver."

Volkoff or Ivan Koloff, could Koloff and Volkoff into . . whip any of those nerds in a fair fight, assuming they know how to fight.

FARHOOD: Why'd you bring that, if you'd let me finish.

HUMPERDINK: They approached me. FARHOOD: I was getting to

HUMPERDINK: See, that's the type of hostility I'm talking about. Whatever happened to objective journalism?

KING: I think you've received tair press.

HUMPERDINK: Oh? You bums don't miss an opportunity to accuse me of something bad. Or one of my boys. Like Don Muraco. We've offered to show films of all his matches before any impartial board to clear his good name of these scandalous charges that he uses a pile-driver. It's the Asian Hammer, hear? The Asian Hammer:

FARHOOD What about Barry Windham?

HUMPERDINK: What about the bum?

FARHOOD. Muraco nearly drove him through the canvas with a piledriver and put Windham in the nospital

HUMPERDINK: Not our fault the guy has soft bones. Muraco used a legal maneuver and poor little Windham got a boo-boo. Ah, poor baby. Maybe Windham should find an easier line of work instead of trying to beat my boys.

SHOCKF I. In the interests of truth, I'd like to confirm a rumor that Tommy Rich asked you to manage him.

HUMPERDINK: He called me from Georgia one night, sniveling in his sniveling style. I told him I'm not interested in punks with no future and said he should come back in a few years when he's learned something. Can't make chicken salad out of chicken feathers.

KING On that note I think we'll end this interview.

HUMPERDINK: Savor it fools It's the last time vou'll benefit from my infinite wisdom

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

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cover! All probably the greatest portrait of a wrestier ever taken infull color buddy. Rogers, chempion at that time, is the subject.

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In November 1958 Stanley Western aunched BOX NG LUSTRATED WRESTLING NEWS which satablished are entirely new concept in the fixed or boxing and wresting magnatines. They consisted or about 65 percent wresting and 35 percent wresting in content of the fines writing and phonographs.

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Verne Gagne

(Continued from Page 31)



Nick Bockwinkel cries out in pain as his wrist is bent back by Verne Gagne (above). Verne accidentally hits Bockwinkel with a low blow (below).



tarnished everything I'd believed in all my life. Something had to be done to save the sport. I decided to take a calculated gamble, a risk which could threaten my life

I vowed not to allow anything to stand in my way. Nothing Naturally, I wouldn't succumb to rulebreaking or any rotten tricks like Bockwinkel uses. No. If I have to win a title that way, I don't want the belt

But I would ignore some of the nicer manners I've developed in bouts with Bockwinkel. If I had to jar him real good and ring some of his bells, then I would I would hold back nothing. This mockery of wrestling had gone on long enough. The time for action was now

I prepared myself mentally more than physically for the bout. Oh, I worked out for my usual few hours a day. But I had to develop a tough, single-mindedness about me, a total thick hide enabling me to concentrate and never waver Despite anything he or Heenan would attempt, I could never deviate from my pre-fight strategy.

That strategy? Winning, simple as that I knew I was better than Bockwinkel. All I had to do was execute.

Doubts? No, I blocked any doubts out. Only a first class fool would say he had no doubts about a match. Sure, everyone has doubts and wornes. The key to coping and surviving is minimizing those doubts and isolating them, keeping those fears in a tight little compartment where they can do you no harm at all

From the moment I laced on my boots in the dressing room, I knew I could win. I kept any doubt far away. I knew I had Bockwinkel. I could smell his terror, see his eyes glaze over with horror for I was a man on a mission and would not be denied my title

From the start, Bockwinkel panicked, lost all his flow and rhythm. I rattled him with a look. Bockwinkel was a frightened little man. He knew he had lost the moment he stepped into the ring

Once I rattled him emotionally, I knew he'd turn to his most desperately filthy tricks. I wouldn't let them succeed I had him exactly where I wanted him: scared. I could anticipate all his cowardly tricks. I even anticipated he'd accuse me of choking him with the sleeperhold.

Let me say right here and now that I'd submit to any impartial board reviewing films of the match. If AWA President Stanley Blackburn decided I did cheat, I'd give up the belt and wrestle Bockwinkel again. But Bockwinkel said he didn't want any impartial board, he'd settle this his own way, in the ring

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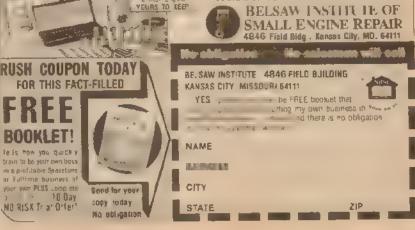
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RINGSIDE

(Continued from Page 8)

match with WWF Jr. Heavyweight champion Tatsumi Fujinami, is planning to take his brand of action to Texas. Fans there look forward to his appearances,

Lars Anderson has shocked everyone by befriending Dusty Rhodes in Dusty's battles against Lars' brothers Ole and Gene. In a st.rring statement, Lars said, "Not only will I defend Dusty but any other decent wrestler who decides he wants to run my brothers' butts out of Georgia. They are menaces,"

Sweet Ebony Diamond wants to unmask his arch rival, Masked Superstar. Ebony hints that he knows who is under the mask, and it is just a matter of pulling off the mask and proving it... Bobby Duncum is at war against Blackjack Mulligan in the Mid-Atlantic region.

For you fans who have been asking about the whereabouts of Billy Robinson, the popular Britain is grappling regularly in Memphis, Tennessee. A recent bout saw Robinson engage in a fine scientific contest against Bill Dundee . . . Stan Stasiak has won the Texas Brass Knuckles championship. Now he's permitted to use brass knucks on his heartpunch fist. Ouch!

Ex-football player Ernie Holmes wants a match against Baron Von Raschke for the Baron's Georgia title... Here's a real low thing to do. John Tolos, in a crazed moment, choked opponent Alberto Madrill's mother (who was sitting at ringside watching her son wrestle) and then proceeded to try and punch her! Alberto saved his Mom and vows to finish off Tolos for good!

Tully Blanchard, the Southwestern champion, says that Wahoo McDamel is probably the worst challenger he has faced to date. "The Indian is washed up." Blanchard said, "He should go back to the reservation. His wrestling days are over."

Florida has a new Heavyweight champion, Bugsy McGraw has taken the title away from Don Muraco. "You said it right Apter!" Muraco's manager, Sir Oliver Humperdinx, said to me. "He took the title. Don pinned his shoulders to the mat and that McGraw bum piexed up the title and took it. We want that belt back! We will file a protest with the NWA. Justice must be served!"

By the way, the Florida tag team championship is now in the hands of Humperdink and his men Ivan Koloff and Nikolai Volkoff. The Russian strongmen upended Jack and Jerry Brisco to gain the honor.

Rookie Ferry Taylor is looking good in Georgia contests

"Crazy" Luke Graham has been fined \$5,000 for nearly destroying an entire arena in Puerto Rico... Besides injuring myself, Abdullah the Butcher has now attacked another photographer (in Puerto Rico) and also made a bloody mess of Japanese reporter photographer Waily Yamaguchi. Won't some wrestler step in on behalf of the gentlemen of the press and break Abdullah's skull?"

"King of the Mountain" is the name of the toughest man in the world contest. The contest will be coming to every major city in the U.S. in the near future. Entered are wrestlers, boxers, bouncers, and anyone else who thinks they are real tough. The promoter of the event is Mrs. Louis Tillet. "I've lived with a tough guy all my life." she tell us. "I am used to being around tough men so I was a natural to promote this event." What happens when Louis gets out of line? "I am the toughest in my family-and Louie knows it," she

And that's all for now. See you next time.

CONFIDENTIAL

(Continued from Page 10)

Zbyszko made his remarks about my age, the thought was implanted in everybody's mind and irreparable damage was done to my career," he said "This was my only recourse. If I wasn't sure of myself, I certainly couldn't expect anybody else to be sure of me. When I get in the ring, I want to be viewed as Bruno Sammartino. Not an old has been, who everytime he gets thrown to the mat, the fans are going to cringe and hope he's not seriously hurt."

There has never been a more honest man than Bruno Sammartino What he said, he meant, But, unfortunately, he was right; Larry Zbyszko had caused irreparable damage. Nothing Bruno could say, however, could remove those thoughts from the people's minds In his fourth decade as a professional wrestler, Bruno Sammartino would have to prove himself in the ring.

If anybody was looking for an old man inside that Shea Stadium cage, they were not going to find one. Bruno Sammartino was absolutely fantastic. In fact, he appeared to be especially fit for this bout. His battle plan was well thought out and closely adhered to. He battered his younger foe into a bloody pulp, and when he walked out of the cage, 40,671 fans cheered for a great wrestler whom they love, not an old man in need of sympathy

Larry Zbyszko knows how to talk. He almost made millions of fans (and I'm ashamed to say, some with the larry and the most important quality and the say, some must possess, Heart

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ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from Page 12)



The Sheik wards off reporters after a match in Los Angeles. In his homeiand, though, he is very courteous to all visitors -even Farhood. Steve does not feel The Sheik should be blamed for doing what he feels is right.

in America," he said as a houseboy served us a liqueur named Arak and a delicious Syrian pastry called mamool. "I don't get to come home often, but when I do, I rest, I eat well. I see my family, and I forget about wrestling I only spend about two weeks of every year here, but it is important that I never lose touch with my culture.

"You see, no one in America can ever hope to understand me without understanding my culture first. The Arab world is very foreign to most people. We have customs all to ourselves In America, my behavior is seen as bizarre. Here, it is understood. A man must be a man When he is challenged, he must defend his manhood. Then, whatever must be done is done There are no questions asked."

On my second quiet day in Damascus, The Sheik, his interpreter, and I went sightseeing. Upon returning, we were approached by a small boy in torn clothes. He asked The Sheik for money. The Sheik handed the boy a few coins. As the boy reached out to accept his hero's generosity, I noticed something strange. The boy was missing the middle finger of his right hand.

"He was caught stealing fruit at, the market last year," The Sheik later explained, "So they chopped off his finger. That is justice."

Sudden.y, all the violence The Sheik stood for in America seemed understandable. Not justifiable, but understandable. Here was a man who does what he thinks is right. And for that, no man should be condemned. [1]

TOP ROPE

(Continued from Page 14)

Dear Dan

You and the rulebreakers make me sick. You also make me laugh. The way you tell those stupid lies is hilarious.

You have been told time and time again that the rulebreakers use you, but you just ignore the fact. If you're so intelligent, why do you act so childish? Maybe someday you'll see the light and maybe you'll realize how dumb people think you are and how you're being used.

Oh! As far as your response, it'll probably be as stupid as your be iefs.

DAVE DODSWORTH Malvern, PA

Dear Dave.

What stupid thing can I say to a person who writes to someone he doesn't respect and then waits for an answer he assumes will be ridiculous? However, I'm always eager to hear some constructive criticism. If your keeper has anything to say, please have him write me.

Dear Criticize.

d

S

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Id

a

In all your columns, I always hear you criticizing good wrestlers and bragging about other so-called great wrestlers. Well, you better stop saying your garbage and try taking yourself in the ring and wrest e a guy like Bruno Sammartino or Bob Backlund

What I'm doing is giving you a piece of my mind, because you sure have no mind

WENDY JACKSON Bronx NY

Civ

State

Dear Wendy,

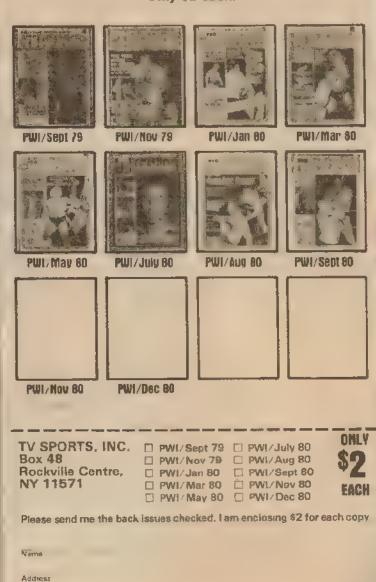
I'm a writer, not a wrestler.
Even clowns like Backlund and
Sammartino should be able to
take me. They can't beat other
wrestlers fairly, which is the real
test. As for the piece of your
mind, it must be a relief to give it
away.

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MORGENSTEIN REPORT

(Continued from Page 18)

WHAT'S BOB BACKLUND AFRAID OF?

Perhaps Bob Backlund is losing his guts after more than two years as WWF champion Repeated efforts by Fred Blassie' to arrange a match between his man, Hulk Hogan, and Backlund have met with unjustified opposition from both Backlund and Skoaland The hell with money. If Backlund wants to be viewed as a rea, champion, he should meet Hogan under anv financial circumstances. A true champion doesn't back down when the green stuff isn't thick enough. I don't care for comparisons, but a champion must measure up to other



greats. Bruno Sammartino wouldn't refuse to meet a topranked opponent if the money wasn't big enough Nor would Harley Race or Verne Gagne. Time to put up or shut up, Bob.

STOP THE FEUD



I firmly believe the Bruno Sammartino-Larry Zbyszko war should be ended. This feud serves no useful purpose any longer except detracting two

skilled wrestlers from positive contributions to the sport Zbyszko must understand he'll never drive Sammartino out of wrestling, And Bruno must accept Zbyszko as a peer Perhaps importing a calm, reasoned man like Gordon Solie to mediate this dispute would lead to a resolution of the crisis. Already, others are dragged into this violent escalation, like Tony Garea, once Zbyszko's friend, it won't be long before all wrestling is polarized around this intensely personal feud. A massive war between armies captained by Zbyszko and Sammartino would bring shame and needless violence to a sport already splintered into warring factions. Men of peace must stand and have their protests heard, despite the risk involved. Anyone associated with wrestling suffers when two perfectly civilized. essentially decent men attack each other like jungle animals.



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Tony Atlas

(Continued from Page 39)



feel, I should always talk to you guys 'cause you guys are really my voice to the fans, so I wanna get that out of the way."

Heads nodded in understanding. Atlas forced a grin and looked from face to face

"I got a little better handle on my anger now, though that don't mean I don't still feel like killin' Von Raschke, 'cause I do. What he done and said to me deserves nothin' less than the death

sentence

"I really value human life. I hate to see anyone hurt, even if I'm not involved. I know this is a violent sport and injuries occur and there ain't much any of us can do. But we cannot try to purposely maim someone. And we don't have to hurt with words, either. That's why I want to pay Von Raschke back

Again Atlas withdrew into inner rurmoil. He scraped his naked feet against the scuffed linoleum.





Tony's muscles bulge as he tries to twist Von Raschke's arm off. Perhaps the Baron has more respect for Atlas now.

sighed, and seemed to gear himself for the words he had to say

"Von Raschke said he does not want to wrestle inferior wrestlers." Atlas began haltingly, measuring each word, each vowel. "He said people like me and Mr. Wrestling II am't fit to get into the same ring as him, and he ain't gonna treat us like human beings anymore.

"I asked him what he meant by that word interior. He said t means a lot, like bein' a coward, bein' stupid, bein' without any talent. No one says that about me. I can take a lot, but I won't take that," Atlas grabbed the edges of the chair

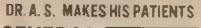
"I told him he had no right sayin' stuff like that and makin' remarks about a man's character, that the only thing matterin' to him should be what happens inside the ring He laughed real mean like and so it has everythin' to do with everythin', that he don't like wastin' his time on cowards, and

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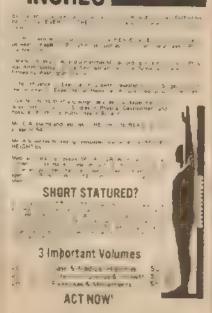
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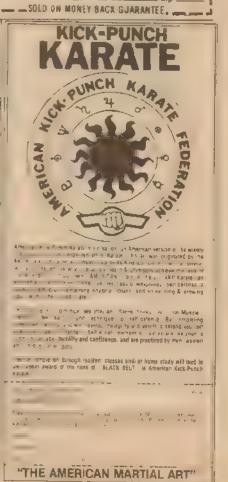


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KING'S COURT

(Continued from Page 6)



As for Morales' alleged feud with Skoaland? "Ridiculous," said Morales, "I have the greatest respect for Arnold, People don't remember that during my WWF reign, Arnold was traveling around the country with Bruno. There was no way manager."

who finally put the whole were successful."

Backland became the first WWF champion to simultaneously hold the tag team title, Morales, a former WWF champion, said he will relinquish his half of the title as well

story into perspective. "Look," he said, "neither Pedro nor I really care about personal glory. We wrestled he could have been my the Samoans not for their titles as much as to try and But it was Bob Backlund stop their reign of terror. We

News Story: Dusty Rhodes Concentrates on Tag Team Wrestling

What's going on here? Dusty Rhodes, who has been number one contender for the NWA singles title longer than any other man in history, has petitioned the NWA ratings committee to have his name withdrawn from title consideration.

"I ain't gonna wrestle Race no more," Rhodes said, "The dude's a dirty dog. He don't fight fair. All he looks to do is get disqualified. I train for six weeks before the match, run



In a stunning announcement, Dusty Rhodes said that he will not challenge for Harley Race's NWA title again.

10 miles every day, situps, pushups, weights, parallel bars, and for what? As soon as he gets into even a little trouble. Race gets himself disqualified. No more, I've had it."

In the past few weeks. Rhodes has been wrestling mainly in tag team matches. Among his partners have been Buck Robley and Dick Murdoch. Says Rhodes of tag team matches: "It's like a night off. No pressure, No Harley Race.

And no world - - - ther [



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HUSSEIN ARAB

(Continued from Page 43)



Hussem Arab attacks a referee with his mysterious boot (above). Of course, Arab was disqualified for his actions. Angelo Mosca doubles over as Arab drives a boot into his midsection (below). Hussein simultaneously holds the Canadian and Mid-Atlantic Heavyweight championships



Hussein's boots hooked upward in the style of a scimitar, a curved Arabian sword. Arab used those boots with devastating results. But exactly how? Were the boots the critical weapon?

"Right before Hussein gets ready to deliver a blow with the boots, he mumbles some strange word," said Jim Brunzell, whom

Arab dethroned as Mid-Atlantic champion. "Dunno what it is, but his entire expression changes, 'freezes over, very weird."

"He's very quiet, very quiet," said King Kong Mosca, former Canadian champion. "During one match, I was down after he clubbed me with a chair. I was

about to get up and didn't hear Arab sneaking behind me. But I did hear him say something, something foreign. Now this is the weirdest part of all. When I looked at him, his face had a glow to it. Scared the hell outta me for about eight seconds before I whacked him one and sent him on his butt. But I had the scary feeling he would a been invincible if I'd hesitated one second more."

After consulting with scores of specialists in Arab customs and history, I found the shocking key. I was thumbing through a book on Arab culture when I saw a picture of Hussein Arab's boot. I blinked a few times to clear my head and then read the startling caption. It disclosed this rare boot had been stolen from the British Museum nearly 250 years ago. And has never been found.

Every single detail between this museum piece and Hussein's boot meshed perfectly, down to the tiniest scratches. I blew up a picture of Arab's boots and carefully compared them. No doubt about it, they were one and the same.

But the best, or worst, was yet to come. This particular book was sketchy on the origins of the boot. I called a distinguished professor of ancient languages at Columbia University and begged help. He told me this boot allegedly possessed magical powers, but he certainly didn't believe it. According to Arabic legend, this pair of boots descended from Heaven and reportedly invested the wearer with special powers. The professor was vague when I asked what kind of powers. All he could do was show me a section of an ancient manuscript describing the effects of Akbar el-Kafir, a great Arab warrior.

"And then his face froze and a glow spread about him I shivered and felt ill.

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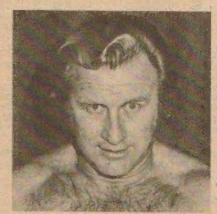
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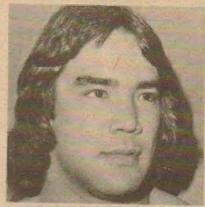
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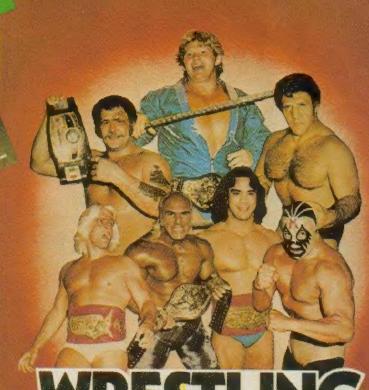
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